**Vocation IS Ministry**

*Our abilities, whatever they may be, are God-given. Our work, no matter what we do,*

*matters to God. Our jobs, well done, show our love for others.*

**Episode Four: Work as Joy**

*We find our identity in who we are, not what we do*

**“Joy”** = Inner contentment and satisfaction, God as both the source and object of our gladness. In Your presence is fullness of joy (Ps 16.11) Take delight in the Lord (Ps 37:4) May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. Rom 15.13

**“Calling, Vocation” =** Our God-given giftedness, the passions which bring us joy, fulfillment

**The Work** “God put man in the garden to work it” (Gen 2.15). Many Hebrew words for work; “work it” means “joyous, liberating service to God”

**The Worker** We find our identity in who we are not just in what we do.

1. Personhood Gen 1:26-27; Gen 2:1, 5 with 1:11

\*Vegetation already sprouting-but means “cultivation, horticulture, fashioning a garden \*Humans are vital, necessary, indispensable

2. Prerequisite Gen 2:1, 5, 9, 15 Creator created creatures who creatively create from creation

\*“I have filled him [Bezalel] with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge of all kinds of crafts—to engage all kinds of craftsmanship.” (Ex 31:2-5)

\*“Creatively”—using their God-given gifts (Ex 26:2) of artistic design (35:32) and abilities of intelligence, knowledge, and craftsmanship (35:31) who could also teach (35:34) and who were stirred to do the work (36:2)

\*Unbelievers contribute excellence in their artwork (1 Kgs 5:6; 2 Chr 2:17-18), which pleases God (2 Chr 7:12-16).

3. Placement Gen 2:8 God actively “put there” the man

\*The best circumstance: design, intention, purpose

\*Patterned—work six days like God (Ex 20:11; Deut 5:14-15) then rest

\*Paradise—the Eden-garden literally, a “delight” “pleasure.”

\*We are God’s representation, representative on earth (“image” in Hebrew)

\*Isaiah 28:23-29 “All this also comes from the LORD Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom”

\*Contrary to ancient “paradise;” communist “the worker’s paradise” (utopia)

**Working Questions:**

1. What do we enjoy? What gives us passion? How do we sense fulfillment in our spirit? What gets us out of bed in the morning?

2. Why should “personhood” be as important as “production”? Why is the worker just as important as the work?

3. Who do we see every day and say, “I sure am glad they do that instead of me”? What part does thankfulness play in appreciating others’ vocations?

4. Where do we see people working with joy? Is joy at work important? What kind of opportunities might we have to talk with fellow workers about the importance of work?

5. When work is unfulfilling by itself, do we connect the common grace of “work” with our neighbor’s need of Jesus’ grace for salvation?

**Quotes, Slides, Extra Ideas**

Workers are unique, special. We were given special consideration (Genesis 1:26-27) Three times the word “created” for emphasis, 6th day pinnacle of creation. We were given special attention (Genesis 2:7) “God formed man from the ground,” “God breathed into man the breath of life” We were given special image: God’s stamp, a signet ring seal (Gen 1:26-27; 5:3; 9:6; Matt 20:20-21). We are God’s representation and representative.

“…if the Lord has been pleased to assist us by the work and ministry of the ungodly in physics, dialectics, mathematics, and other similar sciences, let us avail ourselves of it, lest, by neglecting the gifts of God spontaneously offered to us, we be justly punished for our sloth.” John Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.2.16)

Pagan myths do exist concerning a “paradise”. While the place itself is described in similar terms to the Genesis account, the Sumerian account is the interplay between the gods of earth and water, ultimately turning into a sex romp in paradise. In Genesis, the garden was not simply “for looks” but to be “worked”. Man’s work is for human benefit not fulfilling a slave status for mythical gods. Frankly, the Genesis Eden bears NO resemblance to myths

Gen Z = “Dream Job” something that makes you happy or you enjoy” Cost of living aggravates mental health and cost of living concerns *Huffington Post UK September 2023* [*https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/personalfinance/gen-z-are-giving-up-their-career-ambitions-in-the-face-of-the-cost-of-living-crisis/ar-AA1gWq9s*](https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/personalfinance/gen-z-are-giving-up-their-career-ambitions-in-the-face-of-the-cost-of-living-crisis/ar-AA1gWq9s)

*The Future of Work demanding the right to bring more of their “whole selves” to work, which has forced leaders to pay much more attention than in the past to questions concerning, among other topics, employees’ gender, race, religion, and sexuality.* [*https://hbr.org/2023/09/3-ways-to-prepare-for-the-future-of-work*](https://hbr.org/2023/09/3-ways-to-prepare-for-the-future-of-work)

*Souring on College Degrees Skills based hiring is the wave of the future. Gen Z wants to learn and lead at the same time. They do not want to be held back by workplace boundaries.* [*https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/careersandeducation/gen-z-is-souring-on-college-degrees-as-a-path-to-success-sociology-professor-says-they-have-a-good-reason-skills-based-hiring-is-the-way-of-the-future/ar-AA1h9jQc*](https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/careersandeducation/gen-z-is-souring-on-college-degrees-as-a-path-to-success-sociology-professor-says-they-have-a-good-reason-skills-based-hiring-is-the-way-of-the-future/ar-AA1h9jQc)

*Passions change, stability is set in stone. I want a job where I’m happy and well compensated.*

*Gina Fahrenholz, CNBC September 2023* [*https://www.cnbc.com/2023/05/16/new-grads-dream-jobs-stability.html*](https://www.cnbc.com/2023/05/16/new-grads-dream-jobs-stability.html)